



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

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December 6, 1990

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TO: M - Under Secretary Selin
FROM: PA - V. Kim Hoggard VKH
SUBJECT: Historical Documentary Publication

Our efforts this year within the Department involving the Foreign Relations series (FRUS) have not and apparently cannot produce a workable solution to the questions surrounding the reform of the project.

Because of this inability to come to agreement internally, we have been unsuccessful in quieting the public and Congressional criticism. Despite our efforts, we are seen to be doing nothing.

Should public criticism of the FRUS continue at the boisterous level it has already attained, I have a very real concern that its target will shift to the Secretary in such a manner as to question his commitment (and that of the Administration's) to provide accurate and complete information to the public. Blame could be placed in his lap for allowing (condoning?) a slow, bureaucratic approach to the declassification process and hold him responsible for the release of inaccurate and misleading historical documentation.

I don't think it is an exaggeration -- the success of the criticism on the Hill has resulted in proposed legislation. The Department incorrectly thought that "if you ignore it, it will go away," but Congressional oversight is a fact of life. The Historical Advisory Committee is a fact of life. The Department must accept these realities and make them work to our advantage.

In an effort to reinvigorate our efforts to resolve these problems, the PA Bureau has devised a four-part strategy that will enable us to modernize and improve the Foreign Relations series, assure the continued integrity of the publication and meet the concerns of the academic community, and forestall intrusive legislation by Congress.

This strategy has not been cleared around the building, but we think it is responsive to the valid concerns of those in the Department and elsewhere who are involved in some way with the Foreign Relations project.

The strategy takes into account the questions raised by the Historical Advisory Committee at their recent meeting, the motivations and insights of the Senate staffers most involved in drafting the proposed legislation about Foreign Relations, and our own carefully thought out view of how the Department can confront the troublesome issues and attempt to solve them.

The proposed four-part strategy includes:

1. An action plan for the modernization of the Foreign Relations series. This plan addresses both the steps to be taken within the Department and those actions needed by other agencies. It also provides Department or executive branch undertakings for all of the operational provisions of the pending Congressional legislation on the Foreign Relations series. Key Advisory Committee members have been briefed on the substance of the plan.
2. The text of a draft Presidential memorandum directing the relevant agencies to cooperate with the Department in assembling, declassifying, and publishing the modernized Foreign Relations series and giving the project the necessary priority to get the job done. The memorandum would also request the Department to aim at opening its historical files at 30 years. The draft memorandum should be an improvement on a similar memorandum that was issued by President Reagan in 1985 but lost its steam by 1988. Senate staffers who briefed the Advisory Committee indicated that a Presidential directive could be a key element in deflecting the need for Congressional action.
3. A draft letter from Assistant Secretary Mullins to the appropriate Senate and House Committee chairmen expressing support for the general objectives of the pending legislations, willingness to have some general legislative mandate for the research and publication of the Foreign Relations series, but offering the Department's action plan and the Presidential memorandum as the only appropriate and workable way of dealing with the operational aspects of assuring an accurate and complete published historical record.
4. The outline of those internal Department measures that are necessary to have the Historical Advisory Committee take on at an early date its heightened responsibilities to verify the historical accuracy of the published record of U.S. Foreign Relations.

I have attached a fifth paper that highlights those issues arising from the four-part strategy that most conflict with current views and attitudes within Department units concerned with various aspects of the preparation of the Foreign Relations series.

PA needs your decisions to carry out our proposed four-part strategy:

1. Your approval of the action plan and its implementation in the Department and elsewhere.
2. Your approval of the draft Presidential memorandum including its provisions for you to chair occasional inter-agency meetings to promote priority for access to and declassification of other agency documents for the published series.
3. Your guidance on the steps to be taken to obtain early signing of such a Presidential memorandum.
4. Your review of the draft letter to Congress.
5. Your instructions on the steps necessary to facilitate the work of the Historical Advisory Committee.

We feel we have tried to work within the Department for action. However, bureaucratic foot-dragging has impeded any hope of getting Department-approved proposed legislation to the Hill in the new year without your impetus.

We appreciate very much your involvement in this issue and your efforts to reach a solution.

Attachments:

1. Draft Plan (to be submitted to Hill)
2. Internal Points of Concern with Draft Plan
3. Draft letter to Congressional Committee Chairmen
4. Presidential Executive Order
5. Draft guidelines on PA/HO and FPC/HDR Cooperation
6. Historical Committee - Internal Department Measures

Cleared by: PA:MDTutwiler *MOT*